

December 3, 1968

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

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STEPHEN WORREL, SENIOR REVIEWER
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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DATE: JANUARY 8, 2020

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: December 2, 1968

SUBJECT: NPT, SALT and ENDC Resumption(U)

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Jean-Pierre Cabouat, Counselor, French Embassy
Culver Gleysteen, Deputy Assistant Director, ACDA/IR

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Mr. Cabouat called because he said the French Embassy is puzzled by press accounts concerning Senate action on the NPT as well as statements by Cabinet officers suggesting that strategic missile talks with the Soviets might take place soon. Mr. Cabouat wondered whether there was a relationship between these two sets of events. Mr. Cabouat also wished to learn our views about current discussions in Committee I at the UNGA on follow-up to the Non-Nuclear Conference.

I responded that I could not add anything to public statements made by Senators Mansfield and Aiken regarding the desirability of early action by the Senate on the NPT at the next session of Congress. However, there has been public indication stemming from the White House that the President still might recall the Senate. I agreed with Mr. Cabouat that as we advance into the month of December this prospect seems less likely. In response to his question I observed that the new Administration was likely to press forward with arms control measures for both economic and political reasons and that I believed that President-elect Nixon's public statements in favor of the NPT in principle should be taken at their face value.

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Regarding SALT I said I was not in a position to elaborate on public statements made by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Cabouat said he assumed that if SALT were to start during the present Administration that the approval of the next Administration was implied.

Mr. Cabouat drew attention to a speech by the French representative in Committee I, Mr. Michelet, of the last week expressing French interest in negotiations aimed at reducing nuclear delivery vehicles. I commented that on the basis of a summary of Mr. Michelet's speech which I had read that the French were still proposing negotiations among the 5 nuclear-weapon states. We welcome French interest in such talks, but in essence the French position is only theoretical, since there seems to be no prospect in the near future of meaningful negotiations with the Chinese Communists. On the other hand the need for SALT is quite urgent.

I said that if the French position regarding disarmament negotiations has not changed, I assumed this meant they would not be taking their seat in the ENDC next March 6. Mr. Cabouat replied that this was correct since the French considered the ENDC too large for effective disarmament negotiations. To enlarge the ENDC further would make it still less effective. Mr. Cabouat asked whether there were any plans to do this. I responded that we were considering ENDC enlargement but no definite proposal has been made yet. I said I thought the Secretary had alluded to this matter during Mr. Debré's recent visit to Washington and that Mr. Debré had said he would consider the matter. Mr. Cabouat said he had no information about this but he would query Paris.

I told Mr. Cabouat that we were trying very hard to avoid another conference like the Non-Nuclear Conference. We did not think it would be a healthy thing to hold a conference which would in effect criticize the implementation and effects of the NPT before the treaty has come into force and before it can be determined how it will operate. For this reason we had opposed the Italian suggestion for an ad hoc UN Committee as an unnecessary proliferation of international bodies. We were not opposed to a future UNDC meeting in principle although we saw no use for such a session before the 24th General Assembly. Mr. Cabouat said he assumed that the French position would be the same and that France was strongly against more international bodies.

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